

Goldie Played a Deep Game, but She Wasn't Quite Sure Which Way That Matter Should Have Been Decided

BEFORE I took hold of Duke Meehan he'd been fluffing around in them amateur shows for a year or so. I wasn't so keen about stalling the kid, but an old pal of mine that was his uncle asks me to give the boy a chance at the pay end of the game and I do so.

Duke's a welter and a nice enough looking lad. Take ten average boxers and this cuckoo was the average of them.

In about a month I work Duke into a prelim at a club up in Harlem. The boy I got him matched with is a flashy fist-slinger that looks good but is really rotten. Meehan's the class of this row and gets the decision after seven rounds of this and that. If he'd really been there himself he'd have knocked the other kid out so quick the last thing he'd remember would be shaking hands.

For some reason, maybe because the main go was a flop, the sport writers make Duke a grand send-off in the next five or six days. I get three offers to start my boy against some real gate pullers, and I finally signs up for a twelve-round fuss with Sailor Stevens, a guy that got his start boxing the compass on a warship. He's a tough scrapper and I don't figure Meehan's got any chance of beating him, so I see to it that the loser's end ain't lost sight of in the shuffle for the winner's cakes.

"You talk like you don't expect to see," says Bud Riley, the club matchmaker.

"Not a chance of losing," I comes back, "but I can't like to see none of our gallant boys in blue get nothing for no beating. Give the lads a bonus, says I."

"Then sentiments does your creditors," cuts in Smiley, the Sailor's manager, "and I'm willing to fall for them terms of yours providing you and me make a side bet of about three thousand smackers. What do you say?"

I stall around a while and finally lets myself in for a two-grand gamble that Stevens can't shut my boy out for eight rounds. While I ain't got no idea that Meehan can win I figures he can maybe cover up and side step the Sailor's haymakers long enough to cash for me. Duke makes a roar about the arrangements and Smiley puts over him having the notion they ain't nothing he can't lick, but I can talk louder than him and the deal stands.

WELL, the milly ain't on for more than a minute when I'm willing to pay Smiley six dollars if he'll call the bet off. Stevens hits my boy with everything except the floor and Meehan does that for himself three times before the bell gives him a chance to drag his wobbly dose to the corner.

Duke ain't all there when the second spasm begins and the Sailor goes right to work at the finishing touches, but like most of them half-baked box-fighters overdoes his stuff. He don't take no aim and shoots wild. Meehan catches a few of 'em but they don't make him feel any worse than he is already. One of Stevens' swings is a clean miss and he's put so much behind it that he loses his balance and flops to the floor hitting the back of his head against one of the ring posts. When he gets up he's slowed up considerably, and Duke starts some wild swinging on his account. He ain't got much strength but a wallop aimed at the Sailor's jaw catches him over the heart and he hits the canvas with his nose. The referee starts counting and if he'd kept it up until Stevens was ready to work again he'd run outta numbers.

The boy's luck don't leave him none after the Stevens row. In the next couple months he wins two more arguments against boys that shoulda beaten him to death. I don't have hardly nothing to do to get business for the lad.

Just ten months from the time I takes him in hand he's matched with Bill Dixon, the champion.

I consents to the slaughter mostly because I'm curious to find out how long a cuckoo can run along on nothing but luck, not to mention the pluckings at the gate. Dixon ain't taking no chance of having no soft spot run out on him, and insists on both sides putting up a forfeit big enough to bust us.

A couple days before the row a guy that's been working out with the champ tells me got sore on him, tips me that Dixon's doctored himself for consilts. His handlers has been trying to get him to call the bout, but Bill's a money hunger. Besides, he figures he don't even need no good health to knock Meehan's galluses west.

If any of you boxes ever had tonsillitis you know that you don't really feel real rotten until you're feeling better, if you get what I mean.

The champ don't look so very bad when he pops into the ring excepting a little tired and pale, but the crowd figures that's just from training hard. Meehan, for once in his life, plays the game the way I tells him and keeps outta Dixon's way, running him all around the ring. Bill ain't no sucker, and the only reason he falls for this chase stuff is because he knows he's got to put Duke to bed quick with his own strength oozes out.

The champ gets over a few straight shots, the kinda bluffs that was good for murder in other scraps, but this time they don't even sting. By the end of the round Dixon's winded and his eyes is dull and poppy. He lasts half of the next stanza. Meehan climbs into him, smashes a flock of slaps to the body and just naturally pushes the other boy over. Bill ain't got pep enough to get up, and I'm elected manager of the champion welterweight of the world without no consenting vote.

"Am I there?" Duke asks me.

"You am," says I. "A guy with your luck, kid, oughta get himself a coated arms with a horseshoe and a pair of tonsils on a field of four-leaf clovers."

Biddy Gallagher, Dixon's manager, yells his head off for a return row, and pretty soon the newspapers get into the chorus. I'm figuring out a good stall for a come-back when a bird busts into the office and slaps a document in front of me.

"Sign here," says he.

"What is it, why and who are you?" I inquires.

"It's a vaudeville contract," he answers. "There's easy money in it, and I'm Moe Goldberg. That's a good

deal more explaining than I do to most people."

I READ the thing over. Buried in a lot of parties of the third parts and a mess of wits and vices is the info that this cuckoo will pay Meehan five hundred a week for thirty weeks to show in a stage stunt about twenty minutes a couple times a day. They is two ideas in Moe's scheme that draws interest from me—the dough and the notion of keeping Duke outta the fight game for seven or eight months while the newspapers is steaming up a knockout crowd for us when we is ready to give our luck another workout.

"What does the boy do?" I asks Goldberg. "Shadow boxing and bag punching?"

"Something like that," says he. "Only they is a gal in the piece and Meehan's got a few lines to pull but they ain't nothing that takes any brains. What kinda voice is the kid got? Think he can get by with a song?"

"I got a idea they ain't no notes he knows excepting dough and me," I tells him. "Them's the two things he's strongest on."

I finally tells Moe his stunt is K. O. with me and I figures I can bring Duke in line. I promises to fetch the boy over in the afternoon and get this Jack Hancock on the dotty line.

Meehan kinda likes the idea of showing himself off to the public.

"Think you can get by with a song?" I asks.

"Sure," he answers. "Take a listen," and he essays to thrill off a few notes. "Now that it's settled that you can't," says I, "let's go over to Goldberg's and give the music idea the bum's rush."

Moe's got the piece Meehan's gonna act in all ready. Here's the how of it: When the curtain goes up Duke's sitting in a gymnasium reading a book—deep stuff like Elsie Dinsmore or The Life of Battling Nelson when a Jane crashes the gate. She's got into the wrong joint but Meehan starts a gab-feast with her. The gal pipes her book and is surprised that a box-fighter should be going in for such top-heavy junk or maybe even that he can read at all. This is Duke's cue to make a few cracks about the punch boys has been misjudged and not really swell guys they is and he finishes up by telling the frail they ain't nothing that lay around museums and going to the uppers.

The Jane in the piece suddenly gets the yen that she'd like to see a fighter in action and while Duke goes outta the exit to change his scenery she pulls a song and dance and comes back and goes through a lot of rope-jumping, bag-punching and the rest of the hop. For a encore, if they is any such, Duke is to tell how he licked Dixon.

"Who's the gal?" the kid wants to know.

"Goldie Lark," Moe tells him. "Ever hear of her?"

"Is that the chicken in the sins of 1922?" I asks.

"That's the baby," says Goldberg. "Punny how I happened to get her. She drops in a couple days ago and tells me she hears as how I'm going to put Meehan out and wants that I should use her. Says she ain't so sure like about the dough, but she would sure like to be in his act with Duke. So I grabs her quick. She'll be a card herself."

"A looker," cuts in Meehan.

"She's a knockout, boy," says Moe. "She'll make the act go even if you don't turn out to be no John Drew."

THE next couple weeks we has rehearsals. Goldie is a bear on looks and a fox in the head. You don't have to tell her nothing only once and right away she can show you where it's wrong.

Duke takes a quick flop for her, but when he's pulling his stuff Goldie gives him a kinda sneery look, as if she was saying to herself, "You poor fathead. Why don't you get out and fight, instead of stalling around on the stage."

Moe's idea is to make all the big tanks from New York to San Francisco, finishing up in the Big Stall in the spring, on the trip back.

The papers give us a lotta kidding about not giving Duke no return match and Gallagher throws apple-cake at us all over the sport pages. The day before we is ready to open in Newark I runs into him on the street.

"When you gonna give us another crack?" he asks.

"Do you really want one?" I comes back, surprised. "I thought you was just bullying the newspapers so you could get a go for your boy with the second-raters."

Gallagher throws me a mean glare.

"If I knew you was on the square," says I, "we never woulda gone in for this drama stuff. Meehan's sore as a bolt because the row with Dixon went more 'n a round. He didn't figure that baby of yours would last over a minute at the mostest."

"That so," barks Biddy. "If you and that horsehoe ham of yours feels that way about it, what say to a winter take-all row with about ten grand bet on the side?"

"Nothing could give me more pleasures," I answers, "but we got a fat show contract we can't bust."

"Don't let that spoil your booty sleep," comes back Gallagher. "You better talk with Goldberg and I'll pay the rife."

"Ah," says I, "they is one thing you forgets."

"Whats' that?" he wants to know.

"The duties me and Meehan owes to art," I replies.

"At the Newark opener the act gets a fair hand and Duke has a chance to tell how he licked Dixon. Me and Goldie is in the wings. The gal gives his stuff a grouchy ear."

"It ain't none of my business," says she, "but it kinda makes me sore to hear a guy bragging about knocking out a boy that was so sick he could hardly stand up."

"You see the mill?" I enquires.

"No," she answers, "but I got it straight that Dixon climbed outta bed to take on that fathead."

"Maybe yes," I admits, "but if that cuckoo hadn't been sick they woulda copped for Duke. That baby's got more luck than you got looks."

"Some day it'll run out on him," says Goldie and ducks.

DUKE'S FLUKE

Sam Hellman's
Tale of the Prize Ring and
the Vaudeville Stage



DUKE'S SO FLABBERGASTED HE AIN'T EVEN GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO RAISE HIS MITTS.

Nothing special don't happen for a couple weeks. We makes all the big sized towns and get a good deal of razzing from the newspapers because we won't give Dixon no return match right away, which kinda gets Duke's goat.

"Let 'em rave," I tell him. "Every time they let loose a roar they is selling a thousand tickets to the row when we is ready to put it on."

"You ain't afraid of him, is you?" asks Goldie. The further we goes the meaner that gal gets.

"Yeh," jeers Meehan. "I ain't afraid of nobody."

"Yeh," jeers the Jane. "I guess you can lick any guy in the city hospital."

"Cut out them personalities," growls the Duke.

"Cut out them grammar," comes back Goldie. "If you're a real scrapper I'm the greatest actress in the world."

"Ain't you?" sneers Meehan.

"I would be," flings back the gal. "If all the good ones got tonsillitis."

"That'll be about all," I butts in. "We got to stick together for a long time yet and they ain't no use of you two barking at each other like a pair of Bill Kenney's cats."

ME and Goldie gets along pretty good, but she and Meehan don't hardly speak unless they happens to think of something sassy.

"They is one thing I don't understand," I says to the gal one night when we is away out west in Columbus, Ohio. "If looking at Meehan gives you such a sour eye full why did you front with Goldberg for a part in the act?"

"That's easy," she answers. "The sides was due for a early flop and besides I figured I'd get a lot of press stuff that wouldn't hurt."

"Well," says I, "if you and Duke keep bawling around you is likely to find yourself hitting the rails back to Broadway, pretty soon."

"I'm doing my work right, ain't I?" she snaps.

"You is," I admits. "And personally I think you're a good kid but if you

keep razzing Meehan he's likely to throw up the works and the row ain't nearly milked yet."

"Think he will?" she asks with a kinda funny expression.

"I don't know," I tells her, "but the boy ain't so happy about the way you treats him. He'd fall for you in a minute if you give him half a chance."

Goldie changes subjects but that night she gets me on my ears again. In this show as I was telling you Duke is reading a book when this Lark lady busts into the gym. She's supposed to take a pep at it and look surprised but she don't say nothing. But this time she does.

"You is," I admits. "And personally I think you're a good kid but if you

"What book is that you is reading?" (That not being in the lines Meehan ain't got no answer. I motion toward the book intending for him to read the name off it, but before he gets a chance to grab off the title Goldie cuts in again.)

"Oh, do tell me," she pulls and looks over Duke's shoulder. "It's the first reader, ain't it?"

"Uh-huh," mumbles that flat-tire without thinking. The audience don't see nothing funny rightaway but when Meehan goes on with his regular lines about how cuckoo he is about Shakespeare and other swell literatures the gang out in front gets the idea he's a comed and acts accordingly. The laughs ball the kid up some more and he and me is about ready to take the count when the talky-talk end of the act finishes and Duke escapes into the gym stuff. He gets through the bag-punching and the rest of the blah-blah all right and draws enough of a hand to go ahead with his spiel about how he won the championship.

When Goldie comes off I grabs her by the arm and lets off steam.

"What's the idea of crabbing the act?" I helps at her.

"What's your idea of acting the crab?" she comes back. "Didn't the stuff go over big?"

"Them lines ain't in the piece," says I.

"Sure, they ain't," answered Goldie calm. "I seen the comedons out in front was cold so I thought I'd pull a new stunt on them. Every team does that once in a while."

"Well," I cuts in, "Duke's got enough trouble getting by with his regular stuff. Stick to the lines, kid. Duke ain't no actor, he's a fighter."

"I sneers," comes back Goldie, "and—listen, I ain't the only one."

Somebody in the audience has let loose a hiss. Duke, who's near the end of his spiel, stops and me and Goldie runs out in th wings to see what's what. Again they is a hiss. Meehan's mad enough to hit Duke in the face. Then he steps up front and yells:

"If the dirty dog that done that'll come up here I'll bust his face in. Come on, you yeller rat, and bring all your friends along."

Nobody don't accept the invite and the audience starts cheering for Duke.

"That's an idea," says Goldie, kinda to herself. "I'll try it."

"Listen here," says the Lark lady, at the hotel. "What's the matter with working that stunt into the act regular?"

"What stunt?" I asks. "The first reader?"

"No," she explains, "the hissing business. We'll have someone at every show and let Duke pull the same lines he worked off tonight. The act's needed a real snappy blow-off all the time and now that we got it, let's use it."

"Is that the idea you was speaking of back in the theater?" I inquires.

"That's part of it," answers Goldie.

FOR a while things is much better and Goldie treats the boy real pleasant and that baby turns himself outside in to make hay while the iron's hot.

Besides the hissing trick which goes big, Goldie thinks up some other stunts which helps with the laughs. Goldberg is got all kinda confidences in the gal and writes me to let her go as far as she likes in changing the act around.

The further west we gets the more razzing we draws from the newspapers about not fighting. Dixon come from California, one of them places on the Pacific Slope and out in that section they is used to talking free.

While we is towering the country the ex-champ gets himself a match with Gunpunter Shannon, an English biffer, and punches that baby cold in less than a sound, which, of course, gives the sport writers a new bunch of harpoons to heave at us.

But the box office ain't hurt none. The knocking makes the hissing stunt sound real natural, and we is sitting sweet and pretty, when all of a sudden the train stops and we is in El Paso, which means "the pass," and we do—out.

The afternoon show goes by in great shape, but when we goes back to the hotel there is a telegram waiting for me from Biddy Gallagher, reading:

"Will you take twenty thousand, win, lose, draw, Decoration Day?" I shows the wire to Meehan and he's keen to take Dixon on the price, but I just gives him the laughs.

"When he talks twice that loud, kid," says I, "we'll begin to tell him what we want."

Duke don't argue and I sends this answer to Biddy:

"Debt to art not yet all paid."

Goldie ain't around for dinner. She drifts in about half an hour before show time and I tells her about the offer we gets from Gallagher.

"Take it," she says.

"And bust up the show?" I asks.

"Tired of it?"

"No, I ain't," she comes back. "But I gotta hunch we is about through."

"On account of the newspaper razzing?" I inquires.

"That and other things," Goldie answers. "If you don't take it you'll be sorry."

"Forget it, kid," I laughs. "We ain't gonna work for no chicken feeds."

"Shoot yourself," says she, and gives me the shrug exit. "Remember, I tipped you," she flings over her shoulder.

THE house is packed out for the night show and nothing about the ordinary happens at first, except that I notice that Goldie is kinda nervous. But everything gets by in pretty fair shape until Duke goes front to tell the world how he knocked the champion out.

Meehan ain't no sooner started talking when there is a loud hiss from the back of the house.

Duke comes through with the regular stuff.

"If the dirty dog that done that'll come up here," he howls, "I'll bust his face in. Come on, you yeller rat, and bring your friends along."

"On the square, you quitter?" asks a husky voice.

"If you don't think it's on the square, come on up," Duke barks.

I sticks my head out from the wings. It's kinda dark out in the house, but I sees a bozo busting

through the audiences toward the boxes.

"One of your stunts?" I asks Goldie.

She just smiles, and I ain't got time to ask no more questions. A guy jumps from the box out on the stage, and blamed if it ain't Bill Dixon!

He don't say nothing, but takes a swipe at Meehan. Duke's no flabber-gasted he ain't even got sense enough to raise his mits and he catches a wallop on the jaw that sends him rocking to the back of the stage. He comes back quick though and mixes it.

"Curtain, curtain," I yells.

"Save your breath," cuts in Goldie. "You ain't gonna get nothing done around here. This is my home burg."

"I ain't, hey," I comes back and starts from the wings to bust in between Meehan and Dixon. All of a sudden I feels something pressing against my back. I turns and there is that Lark gal with a rife that she grabbed from one of them Swiss sharpshooters that come on in the act after ours.

"Bust out," she hisses. "Let 'em fight."

Which I done. Duke is dressed in regular fighting togs while the other guy is got a sweater and pants and shoes on, but they don't stop him none. The lads stand toe to toe trading wallops and I'm kinda proud of the way my boy is delivering.

Most of the crowd is figuring this row as a part of the show, but when Duke busts that Lark lady over Dixon's eye and cuts a gash about a yard long they begins to get wise.

I turns around to Goldie. "Tell done this, you—?"

"Sure," she says with a grin.

"Why," I asks.

"Look," says she.

Duke catches one in the stomach and sags to the floor, but he ain't through by a darn sight. He hops up in no time and boxes into Dixon with both fists. Before that bozo can beat off Meehan he's taken enough punches in the body to make him sick.

"Cut it out, cut it out," I yells, but they is both fighting like a couple wild men.

"Get him, Bill," shouts Goldie. "Get him," and Bill does. Though he is nearly all in himself he manages a short right job that sends Duke to the floor. The kid's game, though. He staggers to his feet and tries to fall into a clinch, but Bill steps to the side, aims a shot and blam out go the lights for Duke.

"Curtain, curtain," I yells again.

Goldie drops the rife and walks back.

All right, now, Joe," she says and down comes the asbestos.

WHILE a couple stage hands is dragging Meehan back to the dressing room I grabs Goldie.

"Now," says I, "What does all this mean?"

"Ain't you wise?" she comes back. "What do you think I quit two hundred a week with a Broadway show to take a hundred for a tour of the tanks?"

"Why," I asks.

"Because," she comes back, "you give my kid brother a dirty deal. You bounced him off when he was sick, and wouldn't give him a chance to come back in a square row."

"Your brother?" I gasps. "Your name is Lark, ain't it?"

"Just as much as his is Dixon," she answers. "The real monicker is Lutz-witz. You got to know, and this is where we live. I started with this show figuring I'd make it flop and get you back into the fight game quick, but I seen they was no chance and was getting ready to give up when that hiss at Columbus put an idea in my head."

"And I," I groans, "like a sucker fell for it. You're a clever gal and maybe I ain't so smart."

"But I am," she interrupts kinda soft. "Duke's a game boy and I—like him." And she walks away like she was gonna cry.

I walks back to the dressing room. Duke has come to, but everything ain't quite clear to him. After a while he gets the straight of it.

"Don't worry," says I. "The fight won't be recognized."

Meehan stands at a desk and takes a look at himself in the mirror.

"It won't have nothing on me," he answers, just as Goldie comes into the room. Her eyes is red.

A Boy's Science.

AN interesting story is told of the childhood of Prof. Federico Delpino, of Naples. His earlier years were largely spent in his father's garden at Chivari, where he grew fond of studying the habits of ants, bees and wasps, and discovered by his own observation the manner in which the great busy bodies, the Nyctopoda, vivisection, constructs its nests.

Years afterward, when Delpino was employed in the customs service, a friend called his attention to the report of an English naturalist describing the manner in which the same bee pollinates the flower of an orchid. The memory of his childhood's studies instantly came back, and he exclaimed that the insect performed a similar service for the flowers of the Asclepias. Hastening to Chivari, he confirmed his statement, and the result was a paper on the subject which at once gave him a rank in the world of science.

Candy Tree of India.

IT is said that in India there flourishes a species of tree that produces a kind of "candy," if that term may be applied in this relation. This tree is known as the basila, and of the three important species two show sugary flowers and the third is called the "candy butter tree."

Now the petals of the flowers are rich in sugar, and drop from the tree in the early morning. They are picked up by the women and the children, and are spread out on mats to dry in the sun. A single tree will, it is said, provide 300 pounds of flowers annually. When fresh, these flowers are very sweet and taste much like figs. They are eaten fresh, or cooked with rice, shredded coconut or flour. The seeds of the butter tree are full of oil, and this oil is used to make a kind of butter, and also for soap and for candles.

LABOR DAY AND ITS PLEASURES

Wallace Irwin's Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy

To Editor, The Star, who cannot know very far off on Labor Day or others.

D EAREST SIR: K. K. Katsumi, the only Japanese bricklayer now alive in America. Reason why he remain living are this: he never lays any bricks. Last time he attempt to do so were in 1891 when he layed two (2). But gentleman who owned a Union were there first and layed three (3). He layed them on the forehead of this Hon. Katsumi with such strength that they broke. Since then Hon. Katsumi have not been laying.

But still he remain quite an enthusiast for labor, because it give so much time for ball game, thinking and other sports. America, he say, are too full of hurry, also busy, and it are nice to have something that keep people's minds off of work.

Last Friday p.m. he comes walking to my kitchen like a delegate for Servant Girls' Union. I see him from dishpan where I was doing some slavery.

"Ah, Togo!" he narrate, "are it possible that you are not going to take a week end lay-off for Labor day?"

"Every day is Labor Day with me," I retorch with music-comical expression.

"If so?" he stonble. "How sweet-lah life must be for you, then. Nothing to do but march in parades every morning and go to a barber's cue every afternoon. Or maybe a clam-shell pick-nack. Or maybe you have a Ford and can spend all time amusing that dear little annimille."

"You are talking diagonally!" I snarrel with my angry hands in the dishwash. "Are not Labor Day best time to labor?" I ask to know."

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